



## Seeing Our Blind Spots

by Liz Allen Fey, CEO

On most cars, there is the blind spot. The one spot in the car you have to look around and double check before making a move. Don't look and the consequences could be dire. And most of us don't just look once, we look twice. Why? Because it's a blind spot, we can't see it, and it's something we can't necessarily remove and so we must account for it.

All of us have blind spots as leaders. We may be not so good at the follow through or the personal touch, or the big picture. These are the things that don't come easily or feel natural to us. We need help from others in seeing and accounting for our blind spots.

How do we do that? The first step is to recognize that we all have blind spots. The second is to ask others to share with us when they see them. And the third is to start looking for tools to help us "see around" them. Remember, blind spots can be both strengths and weaknesses.

Here are two examples. When I first started in business, much of my time was spent meeting possible new clients. A colleague would join me on those visits and after our third one, she said to me: "How is it that you always find something positive to say about these people? You always find a way to tell them what they are doing right." When she told me that, I was floored. I knew that I saw the positives, but I didn't realize that not everyone saw them the way I did. This was a strength I wasn't aware of and one I could build on. My colleague didn't have that skill and basically was asking for my help in developing that skill. So I did. At staff meetings, I started to ask everyone to identify what was going right with their clients and how they might leverage those strengths. It had great results - more confident staff and more satisfied clients!

The second example is also about me. I'm not good at proofreading. This article is only made possible because I had a proofreader go over it. I can re-read what I write, I can read it aloud and I still will miss typos and missing words. I've worked on it for years. I've learned to slow down and read each word aloud. I will catch many typos, but the assist I really need is for another person to read my work. It takes longer, but when I account for the time it takes, the final product is of much better quality and always better received. What does that mean for me? I have to allow myself the time to finish the article, and the time for a proofreader to read and edit. The results: less frustration on my part and more satisfied readers.

So here's my question to you: what are your blind spots? If you don't know, go ask three people you work with or your spouse, parent, sibling, child or friend and they can tell you. Believe them and start thinking how you might account for that blind spot.